

# Bard

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# Bard

31.

But to throw all that away like the sun setting  
who knows what will come up again out of the sea  
the only monstrosity is me  
a two-headed boy with hands on fire  
then the mist calmed in along the sound  
you can remember an oriole above the deck and not much more  
spilling aftermaths the custard we think with  
in Vienna the central cemetery (Peace Yard) in snow  
no peace only a relaxing  
drumroll and the horses you never knew who died  
until they came to life again  
Sunday morning in the park and no one there.

32.

These things at work again and who can say  
blame the otter for the beaver's dam  
we are so bad at causes and effects  
time to go to there is no school  
and sit there all day dreaming  
the naked teachers stroll around the room  
daring you to see them as they are  
the words slip off the meanings  
the sun keeps rising all day long  
you'd rather be home a book in her lap  
why don't you read me like you used to  
how did your father's car get so far up the tree.

33.

The French called them *enfances*  
stories about the childhood of great men  
heroes before they could lift up the sword  
and we have infants too and we have swords  
we call them memories to use against the world  
of what just seems to happen  
*remedium amoris* remember the last time  
the taste in your mouth the nasty telephone  
things never change the way you do  
cause without effect tugboat awash in storm  
I love the taste of what won't let me be  
thighs of a scarecrow feathers of a clock.

**34.**

**Take a long time to work it out  
merciless mankind at the mill with slaves  
of course I remember my masters  
John O'Clock and William Psalmist,  
brown Thomas and the Jewess of Baltimore  
I am the Middle Ages born again  
reviver of dragons mountebank of miracles  
three drops of my own blood in the snow  
and I was the woman I was the lost Christ  
I was the ship to Marseille and the cave in the Vaucluse  
I was the stone he stepped on  
I was the crown on the soft hair of his head.**

35.

Am I clear yet of the old diseases  
it's always too late to begin  
to be a bird  
a story out of a different miracle  
pay me for what I don't do  
there is a sense that all poetry is blackmail  
always a veiled threat  
dangerous scent of wild roses  
do something do something it always says  
I am what the author left out  
more of an answer than a question like most philosophy  
what we don't need is more answers.

**36.**

**Small gosling paddling along the shore  
finding the secret roads in running water  
it goes by but they stay on  
in the dark every house is huge inside  
walk with me the midnight hallways  
down the cliffs and over the meadows  
and never reach the bathroom door  
moonrise in the kitchen sink  
Uncle Charlie keeps his specimens awake  
I rinsed the city and flew out to sea  
Bristol of the fishermen sandford of the song  
be my ancestor honey be my Palestine.**

**37.**

**Be self-indulgent while a self persists  
the birds are gone but men flee work  
the tiler has a clipper the hedge is thick  
angry voices of the pilgrims bother me  
and my roof needs re-thatching who are you  
are you Madeleine after all all history in your hand  
they showed me so many things I took the oath  
I felt the sword blade across my Adam's apple  
hoodwinked gladly in the name of love  
all the businessmen in masks and music  
a secret society made entirely of you  
chain the bike and ride the almond tree away.**



**38.**

**Cast among minnows the maiden floundered  
out of the little brook baring a message  
all is revealed we've known all along  
water drips along the shank the arch is high  
light shows through the least of our buildings  
only a pyramid can hold all that dark  
there's still some ink left in the world  
inscribe yourself in the family Bible using your Hebrew name  
broken branches make good torches  
renew my membership in France  
for I was born before the poem ended  
the children were still struggling in the apple tree.**

**39.**

**Wham for the ferly, equal folk for equal fay  
your old days come true again a bread  
broken open to show a beating heart  
Saint Mila showed to show that all's alive  
(broken cistern but the water stayed, tree  
fell but the leaves stayed in the sky  
perfect in their dispositif origin of stars)  
I was Melchizedek who priested in the rocks  
I sheeped along among my little goats  
try to make hale and holy what you can  
for this is sparrowland the good  
this is sky with stones in it and all of us.**

**(11 June 2013)**

## CHURCH'S AT LOW TIDE

What had been sand is thick with weed  
after the false storm and the spring  
the rocks themselves are different  
but that vague shape over there on the horizon  
is still America.

Our feet sink two inches into the mulch of it  
high tang of it and the cormorants fly by.  
White egret on the sea rocks, an oystercatcher  
investigates his newfoundland. In and out,  
no fixed point in all this. Can't rely  
even on the sky. Gravity, maybe?  
But we're standing up somehow,  
contradict the force of earth with every move.

2.

I love it here the joy of discomfort,  
no place to sit or lie or be at ease.  
The joy is vigilance, eye on the horizon,  
one eye overhead. Every step  
precarious, hidden rocks, tide pools,  
the tide is coming in, almost seems  
to be coming up from under us, out of the earth  
not just rolling in from the bay. America.

**We are between movements caught,  
the spiritual geology of our condition  
needs study, no more theology,  
let's find out where we are.  
What moves below my feet.  
You bend and pick up a small slipshell  
and hand it to me. I blow  
the sand out of its bight.  
Retain. Keep this evidence  
of another world. The only one we have.**

**11 June 2013**

**40.**

**Actinism or reaction to the sun  
as if a schooner came in your childhood  
with a pretty nursemaid on it  
taught you her language and took you to sea  
and you never came back, that would be me.  
Water is your only comfort aren't I,  
slow drip of language from the rock  
my father brought me to a mountain spring  
who knows where Castalia I think  
and when you drink that water you too are sea  
and everything is river ever after  
and you are everyone because you watched her lips.**

**41.**

**All far enough but do they listen  
give them what they want and they'll come back  
fierce dangers of getting what you wish  
these are Moralia a guide for the oversexed  
lost in the Middle Ages now re-upholstered  
in glamorous satin language America America  
I call you empty and I wade ashore  
open the downturn invade the nucleus  
Lincoln enthroned like an emperor  
by eagle held together disparate republics  
the cure almost worse than the disease  
almost almost and Odessa's black chess pie.**

42.

The one good thing about the Bible is the footnotes  
commentaries proliferate like flies in the butcher shop  
every decent word needs a dozen footnotes  
the simplest human sentence breeds a Mishnah of its own  
and then they write that down and before you know it  
we need eight billion people on the planet  
to pronounce all the declensions of that first verb  
*volo* was it or *nolo* or *gimme* or *I thirst*  
write it down as if the flowers might forget  
or Egypt turn wet again and Pharaohs speak  
and mothers fret about their adolescent sons  
and Abel has a secret wife who cards his wool.

**43.**

**Various various a book in the wind  
the birds reading it as best they can  
slow down little language I'm only a child  
aftermaths are all written down long before  
just find the right page and squeeze it tight  
don't let anybody see you walk that street  
it goes to the hospital where they park the mad  
those who released themselves from the ordinary  
and wouldn't you if you could get away from it  
the badgering of business the noise of news  
and you alone on your clipper ship.**



**44.**

**Through the skirl of the Elgar violin concerto  
I hear seagulls squawking over the Isle of Wight  
it is 1954 I'm going home at last  
the island mentioned in the sea  
and every nineteen years at summer solstice  
the god dances in the sky above his ring of stones  
a temple built from time alone  
or I am the one who dances there  
me can you imagine me prancing in a cloud  
yet he's there and she is with him  
and the two of them inhabit me  
just as if you dare to look inside yourself you'll find me there.**

45.

Ogmious tongue me what to tell  
halfway to hell I dare make invocation  
*inspirez-moi* the Temple must be built  
tenor solo on a bare rock in Judaea  
teach me how to do this thing you make me do  
all the hymns of Milarepa smile from strange obedience  
teach me to tell what I don't know  
learn from the babble when you sting my lips  
strange means an unknown woman  
coming through the door arms full of flowers  
I can't understand a single thing she says  
I have no choice but to write it down.

**46.**

**Put a picture of the Temple here  
as you imagine it so it shall be  
here is a picture of it or of you building it  
here is a rainbow to wear around your neck  
it keeps you safe in battle with the sky  
who taught me to work this damned machine  
all moving parts are still only the electrons move  
rich men keep getting richer as drunkards just stay drunk  
there is no doorway to their castle  
the house goes on forever like the old Winchester place  
money has no natural frontier  
the violin quietly mourns the new-fallen king.**

**47.**

**Keep your glasses on tonight you'll see me in your dreams  
because I walk with feet of stone no one can hear  
you will hear a ship crying out in the fog  
you'll see my breath condensing on your mirror  
don't worry I'm everywhere  
keep your white noise machine on all you like  
I am a sound that makes no sense  
relax I'm finally talking about myself  
you're safe as long as I go on talking  
an apple or an orange is also a machine  
no moving parts but you and me  
alone at midnight in a broken world.**

**48.**

**Man with three hearts  
represented on the stone altar by three birds in flight  
sky is always the same as your body  
that's how you know where anything is  
how anything means  
regulation fog rolls in abates the day  
god heart beast heart and one more  
the heart I gave you was not my own  
I offered the whole city to the holy ones  
anything you can conceive is yours to give but not to take  
what kind of birds are anything  
a crow a jay a mockingbird none of these.**

**(11 June 2013)**